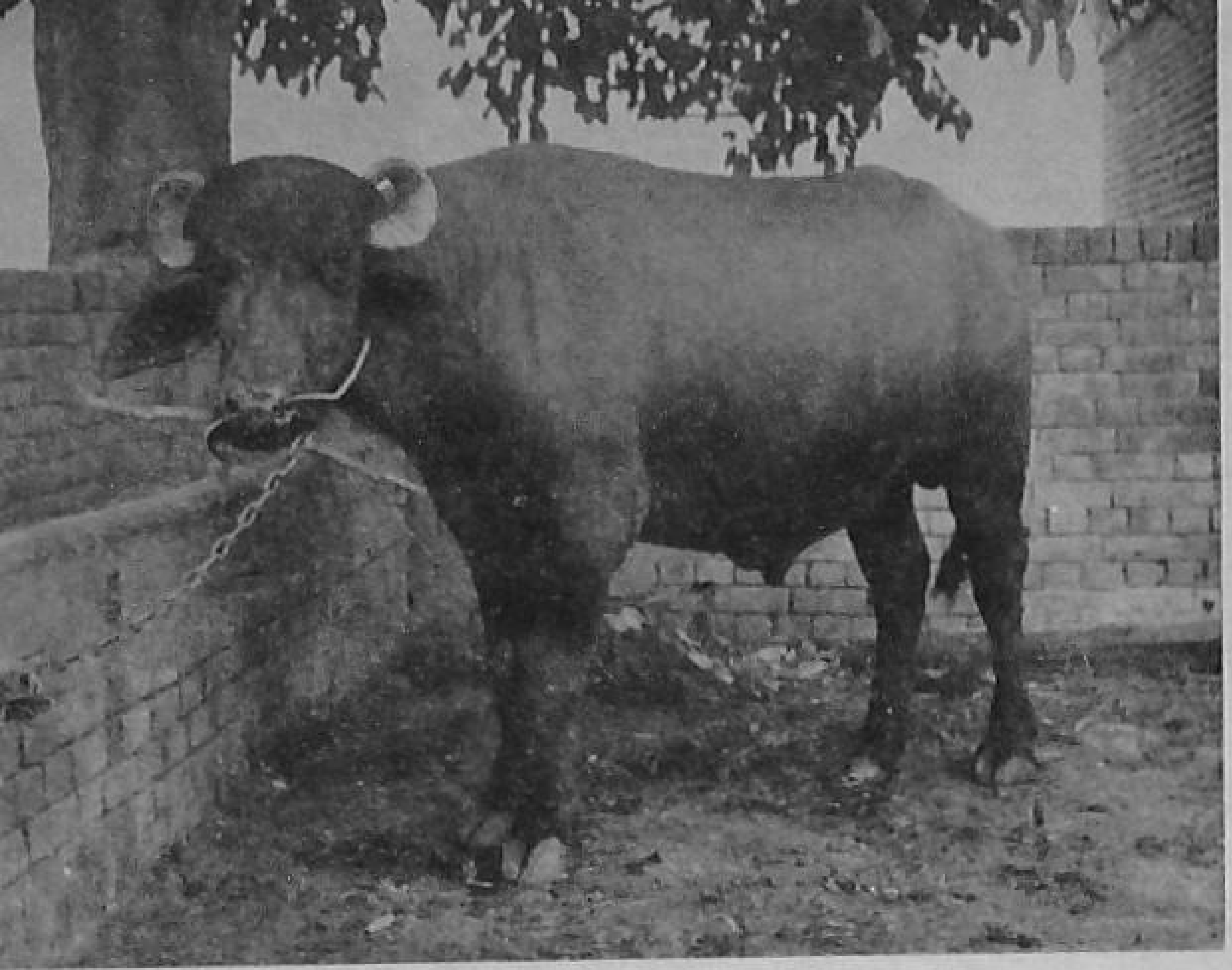
Panchayati Raj

OCTOBER 1963

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL, RURAL EXTENSION TRAINING CENTRE
29 OCT 1963
T. KALLUPATTI

Shri Jagdish Rai, a Sarpanch and a President of a Co-operative Farming Society, driving a tractor on the Farm. Fifteen years ago, he came as a refugee from Pakistan with hardly anything with him. Through perseverance and hard work, he built up his economic position. He settled as a model farmer in village Navagaon in the Punjab and soon became its chosen leader.

(More pictures on reverse)



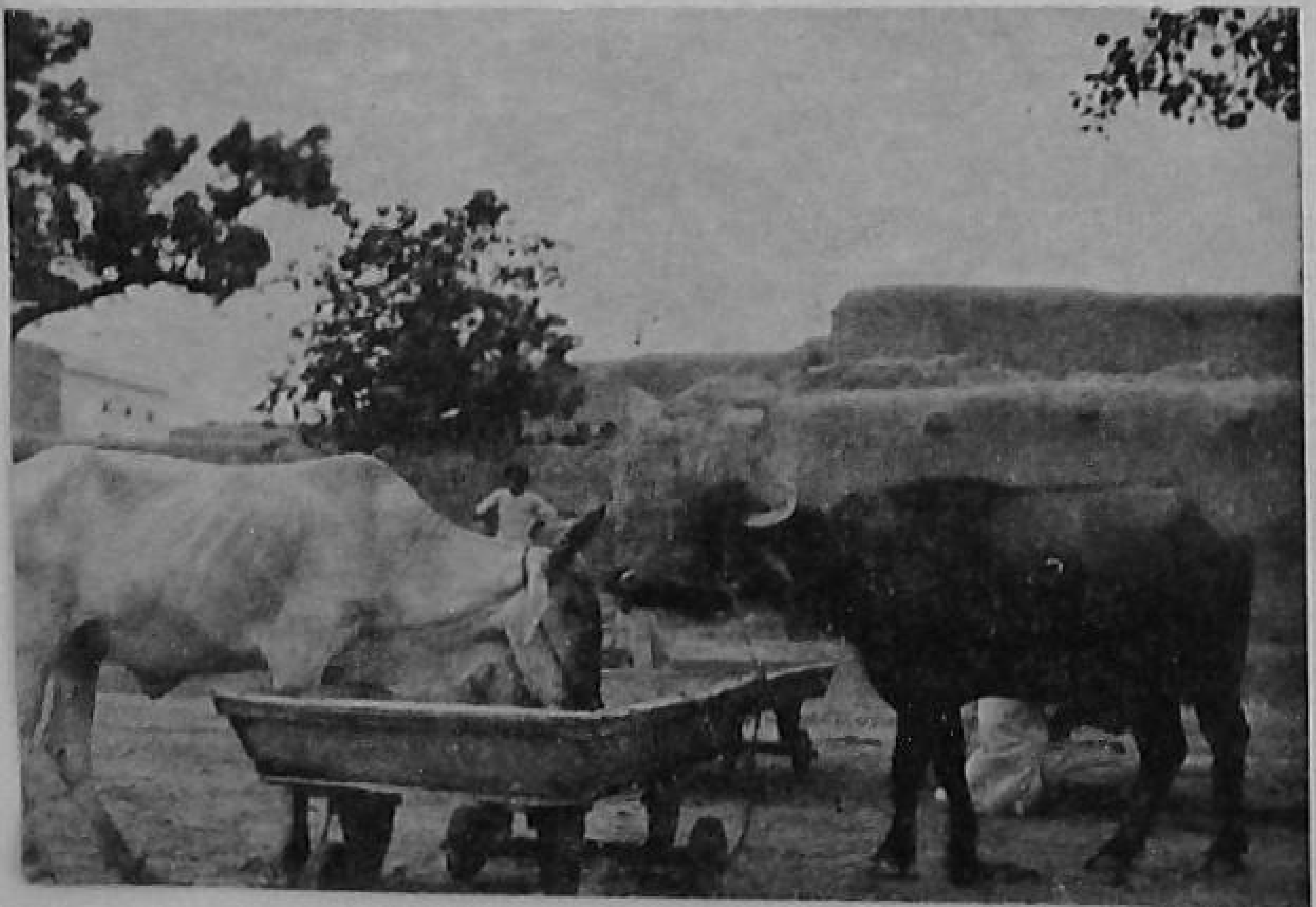
Shri Jagdish Rai knows the value of a he-buffalo of good breed. He has kept one at his co-operative farm.

He is fond of cattle of good breed. Those in the picture above are not in the co-operative pool, but are his private property.

A MODEL FARMER & A VILLAGE LEADER

Wooden trolleys serve as the improved type of mangers for the cattle.

Poultry farming is also one of his hobbies. Here is a shed for keeping poultry.



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LETTERS

TOO MANY REPORTS AND RETURNS !

Dear Friend,

AT THE TIME of the last Annual Conference on Community Development and Panchayati Raj held in New Delhi, Shri S. K. Dey, Union Minister had remarked that the burden of filling in Reports and Returns on the V.L.W. was so heavy that he could not do full justice to his job in the field. He pleaded for reducing the paper work suitably so as to leave him free for attending to the extension work for which he is really meant.

Talking of the Village Production Plan, Shri Dey suggested that it was too cumbersome and that the V.L.W. as well as the farmer were unable to prepare it. The result was that the Village Production Plans had been prepared in a few isolated places only.

May we request you to give thought to the above and let us have your views on the subject ? Constructive suggestions as to which Reports and Returns can be done away with, causing the least disturbance to the Programme, and how the Village Production Plan can be modified, would be welcome for purposes of publication under this column.

Yours etc.,
EDITOR.

GRAM SEVAK AS A MODEL FARMER

Sir,

"Example is better than precept," runs the old saying. A Gram Sevak is expected to inform and educate the farmers about improved methods of cultivation. He will be better able to do his job if he can establish himself as a model farmer. This, he can do by undertaking cultivation on a small plot of land attached to his residential quarter. He should confine himself to vegetable and fruit cultivation only. Our agriculture badly needs this bias in favour of friut and vegetable growing.

The Gram Sevak's house is frequented by many villagers who can be taken round and explained the various techniques of improved cultivation on the farm.

The model farm of the Gram Sevak may well become a sort of a research station where new experiments can be conducted. Seeds purchased may be first tested here and then supplied to the villagers. I suggest that half an acre of land be attached to every Gram Sevak's residential accommodation to serve as a model farm.

Yours etc.,
H. Huliyarappa
Gram Sevak

20-8-1963
Devanahalli,
Bangalore Dist.

Our Main Job :

BUILDING UP MEN AND WOMEN

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

WE WELCOMED the Community Development movement because it seemed to us to represent our basic approach, which was to do many things, of course, but essentially to build up men and women. All other things, including the matter of production is secondary. We need men and women to do the job, and we felt that the Community Development movement would vitalise the people, more particularly the rural masses and give them the energy and capacity to grow.

PANCHAYATI RAJ MOVEMENT

I have no doubt that the Community Development movement did that to some extent and continues to do that but we felt gradually that it was getting into a rut and losing itself into procedures and discussions and not accomplishing all that was expected from it. Then it took a turn leading to the Panchayati Raj movement which was a very happy thought and full of potentialities. It ultimately meant faith in our people to whom we are giving power. The motive behind that was to build up men and women who would know how to do the job and, therefore, have the capacity of self-growth. We talk about the push-off stage and all that, but, it seems to me, the basic thing is this capacity of men and women. Once you think in those terms, immediately you multiply the capacity for growth enormously, because it does not depend merely on some odd officer here and there, although officers count and are important, but something which grows out of millions of people. Once you achieve that, the growth can be phenomenally rapid. This growth, which is solid, which is rooted in the ground, which is rooted in millions of people, cannot be put down or stopped or obstructed or defeated. If you have at the base vast numbers of individuals fighting for causes they hold dear, then it is exceedingly difficult, if at all possible, for anybody to defeat them. It is men and women who count and they cannot be driven about by executive orders. I do not believe in dumb driven cattle. So, Panchayati Raj is the concept of encouraging people to develop and to gain self-reliance; it means spreading out the functions of Government in those areas to these vast numbers of new authorities. No doubt there are dangers of non-official bosses arising. There is the danger undoubtedly, as Shri Dey put it, of a vast number of feudal regimes or something corresponding to feudal regimes arising, and that will not be a good development. It may, instead of being a progressive step, even have reactionary results. Well, one takes these chances and faces them and hopes ultimately that the opportunities of service, training and the needs of the situation as well as of the various developmental forces that are working in India, will condition our people and take them in the right direction. How are we to help in that process ? I think that there is no halfway house between trusting the people and not trusting them. We must trust them because half-trusting people creates neither a sense of responsibility in them nor that sense of facing problems which the whole concept of giving them a certain measure of freedom and authority ought to create. We have to proceed with Panchayati Raj trying our best to keep it on the right rails, helping it by trusting them and not imposing too much official authority on them. This applies equally to co-operatives and the co-operative movement. I am absolutely convinced that the co-operative movement is a farce and a fraud if it is run by officials. It is not a co-operative movement, whatever else it may be, and it will never grow.

AGRICULTURE LAGS BEHIND

We talk about production which is the essence of everything that we want. It is a painful thought that after 15 years of freedom, we should still be thinking about problems which we thought would be relatively easy to solve. It is an irritating thing, an annoying thought; but there it is. We have laid down the best of principles and our approach to things has been good, I think, on paper; but somehow it has not been translated into action. Let us take agriculture. The very concept of our peasant proprietors, peasant

farmers is rather an individual concept. Therefore, you have to think more and more in terms of the functions of those individuals. Directives were no doubt issued, but I do not know how far these directives went down to the individual farmer and pointed out his responsibility in the matter to him. There is lot of paper work, but paper is sometimes difficult to digest and I do not think it was digested, at least not the whole of it. I do not know if the army of Village Level Workers we created were up to the mark. I am told that many of them thought themselves as superior persons and sought to boss the people they were there to serve. This is the kind of thing that irritated me exceedingly because their work is just the reverse of it. So far as agricultural production is concerned, people have gone on repeating for many years that this must be tackled ultimately at the individual farmer's level. I do not know how far it is done, except perhaps at the level of a large number of circulars and sometimes of speeches and seminar; but not at the individual farmer's level, making him responsible to do this. We are passing through a stage of fairly fast transition. A very basic change is coming over India. It is coming over the rural masses, oddly enough partly even through their children who go to school. One of the biggest revolutionary features is, of course, electric power. If you spread that fast enough, I think we would achieve more than any other single thing that we can do. The rural masses are changing. The process of modernising our rural conditions is taking place, not only externally but internally, in the minds of the people and we have to give it a direction and a push. I do not propose to go into the many problems; but I feel that there is danger of one's losing oneself in this forest of petty problems and forgetting the main thing by which you and we will be judged. I would, therefore, beg of you to consider how to make the Panchayati Raj and Community Development programmes achieve the main things aimed at.

At the present moment we have, apart from everything else, grave problems of defence before us and nobody knows what further sacrifices may be demanded from us. Apart from this, there is the whole concept of our development which calls for sacrifices. I would like you to take this larger view and realise that nothing is more harmful than that you should function as a set of bureaucratic officers in a structure of bureaucracy when you have to deal with a growing dynamic thing, Indian democracy at the roots. You cannot tie down the huge number of people by rules and regulations. This is not the way to progress. You have to get out of that mentality and put yourself as the head of an advancing movement, of a spreading movement and take risks. It is better to have courage and do something than not do something for fear of getting into trouble.

OUR BASIC PRINCIPLES

We have certain basic principles for which we stand, as a Government, as a people. We stand for democracy and for broadly a socialistic order of society. We stand, therefore, for democratic socialism. We stand for these things because we think that is the way of growth for our nation, which will make our people grow out of their rigid and static shells and give them life and the power of growth. In order to achieve that we stand for planning, which means an intelligent, logical approach to the nation's problems and not leaving them to chance or to any individual's goodwill. If you keep these in view, the other problems might perhaps be easier of solution. Gandhiji laid stress, I think, more than once on the way to judge problems and to think of the effect it would have on the poorest in the community. If they are not benefited, then it is a bad solution. I feel that it is a good test, although it is not very easy to apply because you cannot test everything by the immediate effect but by the subsequent effect too. But we have to keep that in view. Our object is not to make a few rich people richer. I have no objection to their becoming richer, but I have very strong objection to a poor country like India going along the path which does not benefit the masses of the people and which creates vast difference between the rich and the poor and gives economic power to relatively few persons. That is the whole justification for the public sector. I may add that we are not against the private sector as such; but we are against the private sector controlling our economy and influencing it in a direction which may not he good for the people. That is why the spreading out of authority through Panchayati Raj is good. We don't want concentration of power and authority even though, to some extent, that is inevitable in the modern age.

(Continued on page 11)

HE WOULD NOT ADMIT DEFEAT

The pumping set owned by the Co-operative Farm

JAGDISH RAI, the young Sarpanch of Navagaon in the Punjab belongs to that rare category of people who would not admit defeat even under the worst circumstances. He believes in honest hard work, everything else being secondary. When he came as a refugee from West Pakistan fifteen years ago, he had hardly anything with him except a cloth or two on his body. He did not know as to when and where he would get his next meal. He drifted from work to work. Being a country lad, he first went to the villages where he served for some time as a labourer on the fields and as a cowboy. However, the prospects of better employment in the city drew him to various towns where he served as a porter, a hawker of newspapers and so on.

AS A FARMER

He is a matriculate of the good old days. As he was relating his life's story to me, I wondered why he did not try to get some soft job like that of a clerk as most people do. Consequently, I asked him if he ever tried to get job in some office. He replied, "No. I have always felt a liking for outdoor work." Continuing his story, he told me how on learning that tractor-drivers were being trained in Pusa Institute, New Delhi, he applied for it and got a chance for training. He served as a tractor-driver for two years in the Pusa Institute. By this time, he had succeeded in getting allotted in his name 250 bighas of cultivable land in village Navagaon. It was in 1953 that he started cultivation and settled as a farmer in the village.

As his economic condition began to stabilise, he started taking interest in the various welfare activities of the village. He would often come to the rescue of the poor Harijans who were faced with various problems from time to time. As time passed by, he earned the villagers' goodwill and sympathy to such an extent that they elected him as their Sarpanch in 1961. This gave him the much-needed opportunity to develop the village at a fast speed.

A PROGRESSIVE SARPANCH

First and foremost, he devoted his attention towards strengthening the financial resources of the Panchayat. Though the Village Panchayat covers a population of 550 only, its yearly income raised from within its own resources is about Rs. 5,000 annually. He brought the village common land under cultivation which began to yield Rs. 2,500 yearly. The village pond was stocked with fish from which there was an yearly income of Rs. 600. Another good source of income was the Cycle Tax which yielded about Rs. 900 annually.

But for the strong financial position of the Panchayat, well-planned and built up by its Sarpanch Shri Jagdish Rai, it would not have been possible to effect such speedy and effective development of the village. The whole village has been paved with bricks and provided with drains to carry the dirty water away from the village. A Panchayat Ghar has been built at a cost of Rs. 4,000. What surprised me most was that the Panchayat had been running a middle school for the last 5 years and meeting all its expenses which came to about Rs. 3,000 per year. Surely, there could not be a better proof

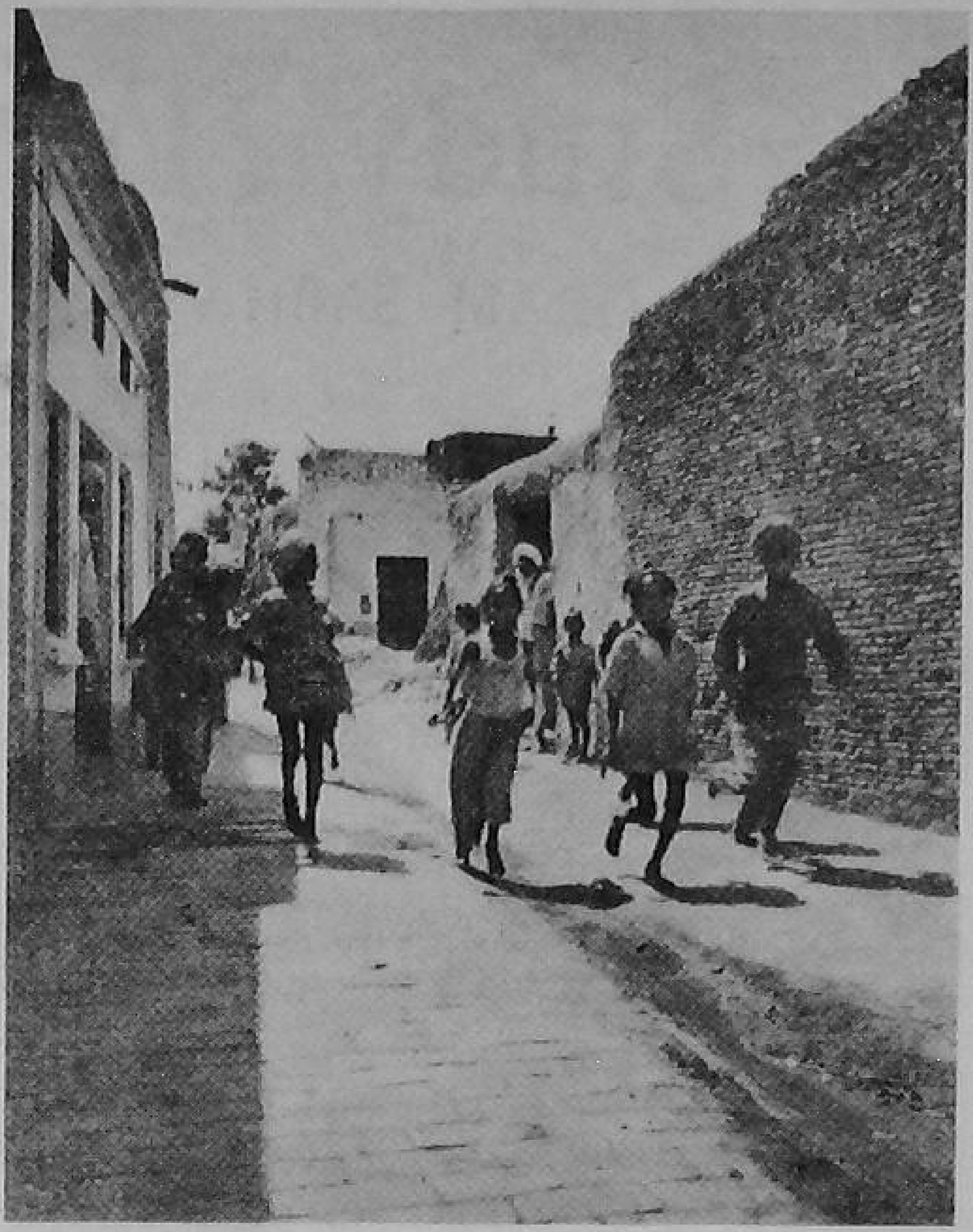
of a Village Panchayat's keenness and anxiety for providing the much-needed education for the children. "How long do you propose to bear this heavy expenditure on the school?" I asked. The Sarpanch replied emphatically, "So long as we have any pie left with us, or the Govt. takes it over."

CO-OPERATIVE FARMING

It was not long before I noticed that it was his own economic betterment as well as that of his fellow villagers which interested him most. He has formed a Co-operative Farming Society of which he is the President. The Society has 13 members, four of whom are landless labourers; the others have pooled their own lands ranging from 11 bighas to 250 bighas. The members have also pooled their bullocks, camel and a tube-well, all costing about Rs. 10,000 as interest-free loan to the Society. Though the Society has been working now for about one year only, its members are already getting more benefits from it than they got through individual cultivation. The Society has purchased its own tractor at a cost of about Rs. 7,000. The training received by Shri Jagdish Rai in tractor driving is now standing him and the Society in good stead. He himself drives the tractor and charges only Rs. 60 p.m. for that. The Society's income from the last Kharif crop was Rs. 6,770 as against a recurring expenditure of Rs. 3,000 only. The Rabi crop yielded an income of Rs. 9,000 as against a recurring expenditure of Rs. 3,000 only. Shri Jagdish Rai who has pooled the largest share of land i.e. 250 bighas in the Society told me that he would be getting an income of about Rs. 5,000 from the Society, whereas previously he did not earn more than a thousand rupees in a year. Ajaib Singh, who previously worked as a labourer on Jagdish Rai's fields said, "In addition to Rs. 600 a year and free meals that I got previously, I am now a co-sharer in the dividends of the society, my share being about Rs. 150." It was thus obvious that everyone stood to gain from the Co-operative Farming Society.

OTHER ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Shri Jagdish Rai is fond of cattle of good breed. He has got a number of cows, calves



Clean and brick-paved streets of village Navagaon.

and buffaloes that are a pride of the locality. He has kept a pedigree buffalo bull and a cow-bull for improving the breed of the cattle wealth of the village. He has organised a Milk Society in the village which supplies about 200 Kilos of milk every day. The Society has gone a long way in improving the economic condition of its members. Shri Jagdish Rai has recently started a poultry farm consisting of 800 birds which bids fair to be a great success.

With a view to help the womenfolk earn some wages, he has set up a branch of Kasturba Seva Mandal. The womenfolk spin cotton and wool received from the Mandal. It is estimated that Rs. 500 is distributed as wages every month amongst the women.

Surely, the country needs more of Sarpanches like Jagdish Rai who having undergone the struggle and experience of improving one's own economic condition, can show the way to others also and help them attain a higher and better living standard!

Study Team Reports

ON GRAM SABHA

1. Gram Sabha can be strengthened indirectly by strengthening Panchayat. This could be achieved *inter alia* if the Panchayat deals with (i) Mutations, (ii) Disposal of agricultural and grazing grounds, (iii) Forest rights and (iv) Irrigation water distribution etc.

2. Gram Sabha should have a population of 1,000 to 1,500.

3. For the first as well as the adjourned meetings, Gram Sabha should have a quorum of 10%.

4. Villagers deriving benefits from works executed through shramdan and D.L.B. should pay betterment levy to Panchayat funds to be credited to D.L.B. This will stimulate more active response from the villagers.

5. A member of Scheduled Castes/Tribes should be coopted to Panchayat/Samiti if they constitute 10% of population. One of the posts of Chairman/Vice-Chairman of Samiti should be reserved for Scheduled Castes/Tribes.

6. The directly elected Sarpanch should be ex-officio member of the Samiti. Besides, Samiti should have other members elected by an electoral college of Panches, not exceeding 10% of the total membership. No contestant (except S. C. & S. T.) who lost in primary village Panchayat election should be coopted to the Samiti.

7. 1/3 members of the Panchayat should retire every year to make it a "self-continuing body".

8. Peripatetic Panchayati Raj courts should be set up for each district to settle disputes arising between Panchayats and individual villagers.

9. While no educational qualification for holding office in Panchayati Raj bodies is necessary (Shri R. Sahay in the note of dissent, however, feels educational qualification necessary), a compulsory training programme for members of Panchayat and, if possible, for all adults, should be organised.

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ON BUDGETING AND ACCOUNTING

1. Each block should have a comprehensive schematic budget corresponding to the five-year plans, incorporating the funds of all development departments, besides resources raised by the Samitis. Such budgets may be attempted for the rest of the Third Plan and drawn up systematically, for every five year period, with effect from the Fourth Plan, the exercise being initiated first at the State level and then carried down to the district, block and village levels.

2. The entire amount due to Panchayati Raj bodies should be provided under one major head, *viz.* "Grants-in-aid to Panchayati Raj institutions", under respective grants. Where this is not possible, attempt should be made to reduce the number of entries in the State Budget to the minimum possible.

3. The form of quarterly progress report of expenditure to be prepared by Samitis/Blocks should be simplified, with greater emphasis on physical achievements, without insisting on separate figures of expenditure under individual schemes.

4. Time up to 30th September of the following year may be allowed to Panchayati Raj bodies for utilising grants-in-aid relating to works as well as unspent balances of other specific purpose grants.

5. The Development Commissioner should keep a close watch on the timely sanction and release of funds to Panchayati Raj bodies by different development departments.

6. The system of post-execution grant is not capable of universal application. Considering the financial position of most Panchayati Raj bodies, it is advisable to release funds in advance and make adjustments at the end of the year against actual expenditure.

7. There is an urgent need to strengthen the accounts staff of Panchayati Raj bodies and to give them adequate training.

(*Continued on page* 16)

Lok Sabha Questions & Answers

Below we give a summary of some of the questions raised and answers given in the Monsoon Session of the Lok Sabha—**Editor.**

Question : What are the main features of the pilot projects for encouraging co-operative farming ?

A. In order to demonstrate the advantages of co-operative farming, it is proposed to start one pilot project in each district by the end of the Third Five Year Plan. Co-operative farming necessarily involves pooling of land and joint cultivation. For providing fuller employment to members and their families, agro-industries can also be combined. Suitable financial assistance and technical guidance is provided by the Government to these societies.

Q. What special arrangements have been made by the Government to ensure supplies of important consumer articles to consumer's co-operative stores in the country ?

A. The State Governments have been advised to give preference to consumers' co-operatives in the allotment of fair price shops for foodgrains and sugar. It has recently been decided that all consumers' co-operatives should be allowed to act as distributors of foodgrains and sugar.

10 per cent of cotton cloth produced by textile mills in the country will be available to consumers' co-operatives and fair price shops at ex-mill rates plus 4 per cent. Efforts are being made to see that this cloth is supplied to the consumers' co-operatives at ex-mill rates only.

Certain quantities of cloves and camphor imported by the State Trading Corporation have been earmarked for distribution through consumers' co-operatives. The National Agricultural Co-operative Marketing Federation has been permitted to import dates, dry fruits and asafoetida for distribution primarily to consumers' co-operatives.

It has recently been decided that all consumers' commodities bought by consumers' co-operatives should have 'C' category priority for movement by rail.

The question of relaxing the conditions for allowing consumers' co-operatives to participate in the import trade relating to consumers' co-operatives is under examination.

Some of the leading firms manufacturing consumers' articles and drugs and medicines have agreed to arrange regular supplies of their products to consumers' co-operatives at wholesale prices.

The question of ensuring regular supplies of consumers' goods manufactured by industrial undertakings in the public sector is also under active consideration. In case of salt produced by Hindustan Salts Ltd., the State Governments have been requested to appoint wholesale consumers' stores as their nominees for securing this salt in accordance with the rules of this company. Action has been taken to see that wholesale consumers' stores also work as sub-distributors of kerosene of Indian Oil Company.

Q. Have the training camps for Gram Sahayaks proved effective in any way ? Which State has organised the largest number of such camps ?

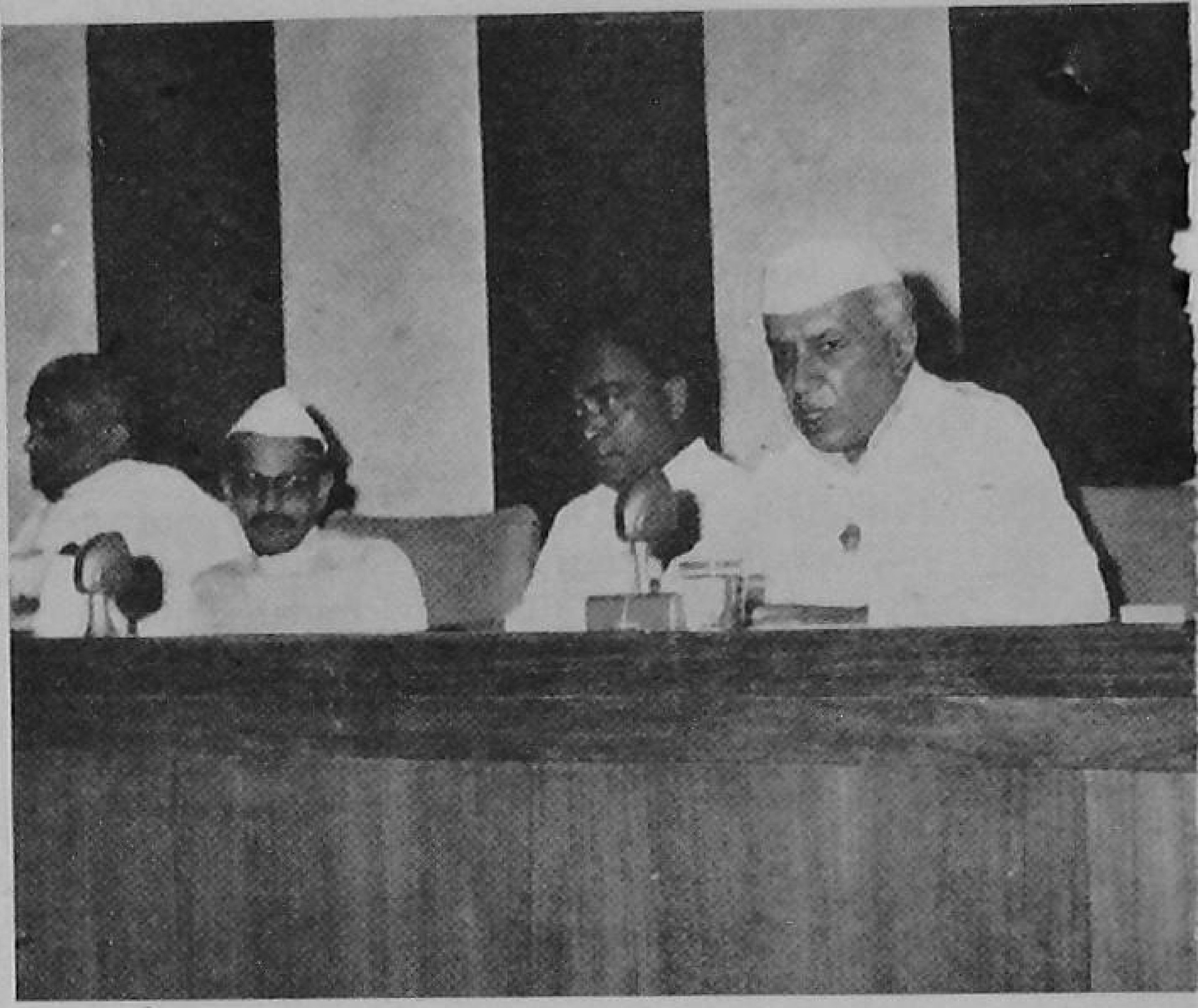
A. According to the report of the Programme Evaluation Organisation on this subject during 1960-61, it achieved a large measure of success in enabling the adoption of improved practices not only by those who had been trained in camps but also by groups of other villagers who were later contacted by them. On the whole, the programme has succeeded as an agricultural extension programme. In the light of experience gained it is now proposed to have an integrated training programme for Gram Sahayaks, youth workers and women workers at the village, block

(*Continued on page* 16)

A WEEK OF CONFERENCE

(By Our Co

28TH JULY TO 3RD AUGUST. In New Delhi, it was a week of Conferences and nothing but Conferences on rural problems. Besides the usual two Conferences of the Development Commissioners and the Ministers for Community Development and Panchayati Raj, there was a third joint Conference of the Ministers of Agriculture and the Ministers of Community Development and Panchayati Raj. A fourth Conference of Chief Ministers and Industries Ministers of States was held simultaneously to discuss the problems of rural industries. It was a rewarding experience to see how the problems affecting the development of our rural areas,—its agriculture and industries were discussed in a mood of self-introspection by our policy-makers at the highest level. The discussions were greatly helped by the presence of the members of the Planning Commission, social workers and economists of high repute like Shri Jaya Prakash Narain, Dr. D. R. Gadgil and others.



The Conference of State Ministers of Community Development

REALISTIC APPROACH

That the Conferences meant real business this time and were not called in any routine or ceremonial fashion became clear from the very start. There were several technical and administrative problems common to the Agricultural and Development Departments which needed to be tackled in order to give a real push to agricultural production. It was precisely for this reason that a joint Conference of the Development Ministers and Agricultural Ministers had been called. Again, there were several problems involving policy decisions which required to be satisfactorily tackled before rural industrialisation could take roots in the countryside that a conference at the highest level consisting of Chief Ministers and Industries Ministers, had been called for the first time.

The tenor of the speeches of the leaders including the Prime Minister and all others showed clearly that they had come to grips with the real problems at the ground level holding up the progress of industrial as well as agricultural progress. There was no mincing of words and there was earnestness all round in as much as everybody tried to understand each others' difficulties in a mood of self-introspection. There was no throwing of responsibilites on one another in a bid to evade the issues.

DEY SETS THE TONE

It was Shri S. K. Dey who with his characteristic missionary zeal and sense of devotion set the tone for the Conference. In an impassioned speech before the State Ministers of Community Development and Panchayati Raj lasting for 45 minutes, he surveyed the progress of the Community Development movement from its earliest stages of Government-aided self-help programme to the Panchayati Raj and recently the V.V.F. and the D.L.B. He said that they had succeeded in establishing a huge net-work of extension agency covering practically the whole

ES ON RURAL PROBLEMS

rrespondent)

and Panchayati Raj being inaugurated by the Prime Minister

country. This along with the Panchayati Raj bodies, the co-operatives and other voluntary bodies constituted what he called "a scaflolding" for the building of the rural India. He however, appealed to the Prime Minister, for a 'clear mandate' as to the purpose for which these vast organisations were to be utilised. In particular, he spoke about the Panchayati Raj bodies which if not given a proper direction and guidance might very well become like thousands of small feudal States in place of the five hundred feudal States which we had in the pre-independence days.

Shri Dey also referred to the various problems and bottlenecks that held up the progress of the programme. He expressed the view that there should be one 'indivisible' line of policy followed by the various Government departments in so far as the issues of national priorities were concerned. He aptly put the question if it would not be proper to keep the extension staff away from activities like Small Savings campaign or Insurance or some similar activities in the context of the present situation. He pointed out how necessary it was to speed up land reform measures in order to improve the condition of the tenants. Without this pre-requisite even the progress of agriculture was bound to be slow and halting. He also emphasised the necessity for speeding up rural electrification and industrialisation with a view to diversify rural employment and increase per capita income of the rural areas.

Coming nearer to the day-to-day difficulties experienced in the field, Shri Dey referred to the extremely heavy and strangulating burden of preparing the numerous reports and returns and the filling of proformas that the poor V.L.W. was called upon to perform. This, according to him, was physically beyond the human capacity. He again was extremely forthright and down-to-earth when he pointed out that the proforma for Village Production Plan was too cumbersome to be prepared by the V.L.W. on behalf of each and every family in the village. The result was that Village Production Plans had not formed the basis of agricultural production anywhere so far. He suggested that the Ministry's top experts should first select a village near Delhi and prepare a model plan to be followed by others. If even experts found difficulty in preparing a simple and workable plan how could the V.L.W. be expected to prepare the same on his own? The V.L.Ws. could hardly have a better advocate of their practical difficulties than the Minister Shri S. K. Dey himself.

V. L. Ws AS 'LITTLE BOSSES'

The Prime Minister, in his inaugural address to the Conference made it unmistakably clear that the first and foremost object of the C.D. Programme was to "build men and women, everything else was secondary." That was pre-

cisely the aim of Panchayati Raj, too. He asserted that this aim could not be achieved if the officials connected with the C.D. Programme were to adopt a bureaucratic attitude towards the people. He said with some emotion that his information was that at some places, even the V.L.Ws. had begun to behave as 'little bosses' of the people. If that was so, the C.D. movement was doomed to failure, he remarked. Indeed, the V.L.W. was meant to be the catalytic agent to explode the vestiges of bureaucracy and if he himself began to behave as a sort of a bureaucrat, it was not a good augury for the programme.

Shri Nehru said that there could not be two opinions about the fact that agriculture occupied the primary position today and that everything possible should be done to increase the production.

The primacy of agriculture in the C.D. programme was also stressed by Shri Gulzarilal Nanda, Union Minister for Planning, Labour & Employment. While inaugurating the Conference, he said that it had taken them some years before they realised that increase in agricultural production should be the central programme in Community Development. Agricultural production was the basic resource which made development and expansion of the programme of amenities possible. Shri Nanda expressed anxiety over the fact that agricultural production had lagged behind the Plan targets. According to him, lack of realistic planning based on Village Production Plans was the main cause of this disappointment. He urged that Village Production Plans should be prepared at the earliest and all handicaps in the way must be removed.

SOME DECISIONS

The Conferences on Community Development and Panchayati Raj took a number of important decisions. It was decided to promote the membership of Village Volunteer Force. However, the minimum donation of twelve days' labour to the Defence Labour Bank was laid down as a pre-condition for entry in the V.V.F. It was also felt that the existing gap between the membership of the V.V.F. and the D.L.B. should be closed and every effort made to persuade all the V.V.F. members to give the minimum contribution of 12 days' labour in the D.L.B. A committee was appointed under the chairmanship of the Union Minister of Agriculture to make recommendations to effect maximum utilisation of the labour donated to the D.L.B. for rural works programme and local development works with special reference to production activities.

The Conference agreed that a system of incentives and deterrents be built into the Panchayati Raj pattern so as to have an impact on the programme relating to the raising of their own resources and the maintenance of completed works by the Panchayati Raj bodies.

As regards the Youth and Women's Programme, it was decided that the Yuvak and Mahila Mandals should take up citizenship education and adult literacy campaign as part of the mass education programme of the V.V.F. The need for having a co-ordinated approach for the women's programme was stressed and it was suggested that the Ministries of Education and Community Development and Co-operation and Social Welfare Board should evolve a joint pattern of working.

The joint Conferences of State Ministers of Agriculture and Community Development expressed the unanimous opinion that the agricultural organisations in the States should be strengthened and there should be close co-ordination between the various departments like Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Cooperation. A working group, headed by the Agriculture Minister was set up to go into the whole question of administration and co-ordination from the V.L.W. to the Development Commissioner and other related matters. As regards the preparation of Village Production Plans, the consensus of opinion was that they should be simple and capable of execution by farmers.

RURAL INDUSTRIES CONFERENCE

The two-day Conference of Chief Ministers and Industries Ministers of States discussed the various issues arising out of rural industrialisa-

tion. Addressing the Conference, the Prime Minister said that the two pre-requisites of rural industrialisation were the development of transport and electrification. He expressed the opinion that the hall-mark of true industrialisation and consequent prosperity of the people was the extent to which small industries had spread and taken roots. Thus for example, he said, the Punjab was in fact more prosperous and industrialised than any other State in the country even though there was hardly any large scale industry worth the name there. According to him, the small industries should keep abreast of the latest advance in science and technology in order that they produced lasting results.

Those who participated in the discussions included members of the rural industries planning committee, the Planning Commission, Shri Jayaprakash Narain, Professor D. R. Gadgil, Shri U. N. Dhebar, Shri Vaikunt Lal Mehta and others.

The Conference upheld that the objective of rural industries programme was to broadbase and diversify the economic structure of the villages for bringing about an all round improvement in the living standards of the people. It expressed the view that there should be no conflict between urban and rural industries.

For reducing cost of production and increasing operational efficiency, it was agreed that fullest use should be made of technology and scientific knowledge. Regular training should be given to people in the use of modern equipment and machinery. Arrangements should be made for continuous research in the development of techniques.

The need for social support, administrative guidance and provision of motive power was stressed. It was felt that a programme for expansion of transport facilities and sales promotion should be taken in hand. The importance of making available electricity and finance at low rates was also stressed.

Building up Men and Women

(*Continued from page 3*)

I think that we are likely, during the next year or two, to pass through a difficult period from the point of view of Panchayati Raj which is going to be period of testing and trial. We can no longer function in a routine way, repeating old slogans and old appeals to everybody, because slogans have a strictly limited use, unless they lead to something. We have, therefore, to think much more deeply and find remedies for the ills that afflict us. One thing, however, that the country cannot stand is our carrying on in a routine way, then radical remedies appear to be necessary. All these are questions that concern the Central and State Governments; but ultimately, they should go down to the Panchayati Raj institutions. We want them to go down so that whatever we do has a strong foundation, and is not merely dictated from the top.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

The most important thing is agriculture. Everything else, I repeat, is secondary. Let there be no mistake about that. And, if the State Governments and the Community Development and Panchayati Raj institutions do not deal with the problem of agricultural production adequately, then everything fails. There are so many other things which are important, but this is most important. There is no help for us but to succeed in agricultural production. Keeping this in view, we have to make the individual farmer appreciate it fully as being the most urgent task. You have to make him believe that this is to his advantage. He has succeeded in some measure in the past but not to the extent that we had hoped and certainly not to the extent that we still hope and to the extent that I am sure he will. That is the most vital thing and all our planning and industrial development depends upon it.

Based on the inaugural speech delivered by the Prime Minister at the Conference of State Ministers of Community Development and Panchayati Raj held in New Delhi on 1st August, 1963.—Ed.

FROM THE CENTRE

EVALUATION COMMITTEE ON CO-OPERATIVE FARMING

THE UNION MINISTRY of Community Development and Co-operation has set up a committee to make a systematic evaluation of the progress of co-operative farming societies in pilot project areas. This follows a recommendation on the subject made by the National Co-operative Farming Advisory Board some time ago. The Committee now set up consists of seven members with Prof. D. R. Gadgil, the well known economist as its Chairman.

The Committee is expected to report the achievements and difficulties of the programme and suggest measures for solving the problems.

Studies of specific operational aspects such as preparation of production programmes, employment schemes and co-operative farm management will be conducted by the Committee. It has also been asked to undertake such other measures as are germane and relevant to the assessment of the progress and evaluation of co-operative farms in pilot project areas.

GRAM SABHA—THE BASE FOR POLITICAL DEMOCRACY

SHRI S. K. DEY, Union Minister for Community Development and Co-operation, summing up the discussion of the Regional Study Camp of Members of Parliament and State Legislatures of the five Southern States, on the role of the Gram Sabha as the base for political democracy remarked that the objective of the Panchayati Raj is to establish a participating democracy and the Panchayat should function as an executive body of the village community to give concrete shape to the wishes and aspirations of the people comprising the Gram Sabha.

He added that unless the Panchayats involved the people, it could not make common cause with them. According to him, Panchayati Raj seeks to create "a government of the people, for the people, by the people and with the people." If the Panchayats were not attuned to the aspirations of the people, there would come among the people a sense of frustration. He, therefore, called for the mobilisation of an enlightened public opinion which could create proper environment for the Panchayats and the Gram Sabhas to function effectively and in close harmony. By mobilising the manpower and by understanding the various problems at the village level, the Gram Sabha could be activised. The people must have something to catch their imagination and propel them to action, he added.

If the people plan a programme at the village level and talk in terms of programmes, politics automatically comes in. If all the village plans prepared on the basis of their wishes and needs are to be carried out, the necessity to create greater enlightenment in the political leadership becomes imperative. This enlightenment cannot be created unless there is a challenge. The higher leadership has to see that people can be sentimentally and emotionally activated in a constructive way. This, Shri Dey said, was sought to be done in an organised way through the Gram Sabha. He concluded by saying that the ultimate strength of the country lies in the abiding wisdom of the people to survive, to discriminate between what is wrong and what is right. The people must be given an opportunity to face the problems through the medium of an institutional forum such as Gram Sabha.

V.V.F. ENROLS 141 LAKHS

THE TOTAL strength of the Village Volunteer Force at present in the country is 141 lakhs. Of this 4.56 lakhs are women. To Orissa goes the credit of having enrolled the highest number of women,—2.6 lakhs.

The total number of man-days labour donated to the Defence Labour Bank is 562 lakhs. Out of this, 46 lakh man-days have been utilised for implementing various production programmes. A sum of Rs. 7.75 lakhs has been received as cash donations for the Defence Labour Bank.

By and large, the programmes taken up by the V.V.F. relate to agricultural production and supporting tasks. Some of the highlights of the programme are bunding and soil conservation in 25,000 acres of land in Maharashtra and excavation of field channels to irrigate 27,000 acres of land in Madhya Pradesh. In Punjab and Rajasthan, waste lands and in Orissa 46,000 village tanks have been vested in the Panchayats for development, among others, through the Defence Labour Bank resources. In addition, in Orissa each Panchayat is also being given about 5 acres of land and in Madhya Pradesh about one acre of land to be developed by the panchayats as revenue-yielding assets with the assistance of the D.L.B. In West Bengal, as many as one lakh tanks are proposed to be developed for pisciculture through Panchayats. It has also been suggested to the State Governments that the Vana Mahotsava programme should be included in the works programmes of the Defence Labour Bank. In Rajasthan, the Village Volunteer Force and the resources of the Defence Labour Bank are already being utilised for this programme.

EXTENSION EDUCATION

THE VILLAGE level worker should be trained to B.Sc. level in agriculture or veterinary science and his pay scales revised. Block Extension and Block Development Officers should be encouraged to take M.S. preferably in Extension Education. These were part of the recommendations made at the five-day conference on development of extension education at Agriculture, Veterinary and Home Science colleges in India which was inaugurated by Dr. Ram Subhag Singh, Union Minister for Agriculture, at the Orientation Study Centre at Udaipur.

Emphasising the usefulness of extension wings, the conference desired that all agricultural colleges in India should have their wings, each with model farms for the benefit of extension students and farmers. Veterinary colleges must be equipped with dairy, poultry and fisheries units and home science colleges with model cowdung plants and kitchen gardens.

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

ALL TOWNS and villages with a population exceeding 5,000 and 50 per cent of all villages with a population ranging from 2,000 to 5,000 are expected to be electrified by the end of the Third Five Year Plan.

Up to the end of March this year, 32,500 towns and villages in all were electrified in various States. Out of these, 3,314 towns and villages have a population of 5,000 and above and the remaining less.

The total number of towns and villages in the country is 5,61,447, out of which 4,562 towns and villages are with a population of 5,000 and above and the remaining have less population.

"RASHTRA KALASH" FOR WEST BENGAL AND UTTAR PRADESH

WEST BENGAL and Uttar Pradesh have respectively won the "Rashtra Kalash" for the Kharif and Rabi seasons 1960-61 respectively. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands have won the "Rashtrapati Kalash" for 1960-61.

During the Kharif season 1960-61, agricultural production in five States recorded an increase of 15 per cent or more over the average production of the previous three corresponding seasons and thus they became eligible for the community award of Rs. 50,000 each. The States are : Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal. West Bengal which registered the highest increase of 29 per cent wins the "Rashtra Kalash". Similarly, in terms of districts, 117 out of 300 have become entitled to the award of Rs. 10,000 each.

In the Rabi season 1960-61, only two States, namely Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, achieved more than 15 per cent increase in agricultural production and became eligible for the community award of Rs. 50,000 each. Uttar Pradesh which registered the highest increase of 23 per cent wins the "Rashtra Kalash" for the season. At the district level, 101 out of 247 districts registered increase of more than 15 per cent over the agricultural production of the previous three corresponding seasons and became eligible for the award of Rs. 10,000 each.

(*Continued on page* 15)

Community On The Move

A NEW TECHNIQUE OF GROUP MOBILISATION

A NEW experiment in mobilising small farmer groups in the village to step up farm output and to better utilize the energies of the farmers has been launched in the Harayanpur Development Block of the Bastar district in Madhya Pradesh. If the initial successes are any indication, group mobilization may introduce a new technique of co-operative working and transform the very pattern of rural economy in this area.

Under the experiment, small groups of 5 to 8 farmers are formed in villages and the most enterprising and enthusiastic among them is made the leader of the group. A person who has faith in the social and economic uplift of the village is chosen as the leader. He should be prepared to experiment with new ideas and practices and have the ability to persuade his group to follow in his footsteps. He is often one who has attended a village leaders' training camp and is familiar with the concept of community development.

The members of an individual group generally live in close proximity as neighbours and meet one another frequently. They usually have common interests and avocations.

The development officials meet and discuss with the members of these groups, ascertain their problems and requirements and help them in drawing up programme of work for themselves. The production targets are set and ways and means are devised to achieve them. There is many a job associated with modern intensive cultivation which may be beyond an individual farmer's means or capacity and yet very well manageable by a group working together. It is here that the group scores over the individual.

AN ACTIVE PANCHAYAT OF MADHYA PRADESH

THE GRAM PANCHAYAT of Khimlasa village in Madhya Pradesh contributed a sum of Rs. 5,000 towards the construction of a building for Higher Secondary School. The villagers also built a three-furlong road at a cost of Rs. 8,000. The people are also sharing the cost up to Rs. 1,200 of the Maternity Home which is under construction. The Panchayat has also done useful work in the sphere of social education. It has organised a Youth Club, a Mahila Mandal and a Fire Fighter group. With the efforts of the Youth Club, a gymnasium is being constructed. A grain mandi has also been started by the Panchayat.

The Gram Panchayat at Mandi Bamora is one of the active Panchayats in the non-block area. The annual income of the Panchayat is about Rs. 15,000. The Panchayat has constructed a two-furlong road and two drains at a cost of about Rs. 9,000. A Panchayat Ghar and a Rest-house are being constructed at a cost of Rs. 11,000 for which an aid of Rs. 8,000 has been demanded from the Government. The Panchayat has sanctioned Rs. 3,000 for construction of a Higher Secondary School and is making efforts for getting electric power in the village.

NAGAUR ZILA PARISHAD TO HAVE ITS OWN BUILDING

THE NAGAUR Zila Parishad will have its own building constructed at a cost of Rs. 40,000. The money has been contributed by the 11 Panchayat Samitis of the district. The new double storied building with 7 rooms and a spacious meeting hall is being given final touches. The Nagaur Zila Parishad is the first in Rajasthan to have its own building.

A SCHOOL SETS EXAMPLE IN TREE PLANTING

THE GRAMIN Vidyalaya of Jaurwade in Maharashtra has set an example by planting 4,200 trees and entrusting each tree to a student for its after-care. The school authorities have opened a register maintaining an account of the progress of the growth of each tree.

V. V. F. MEMBERS DIG FIELD CHANNELS

IN WEST BENGAL, about 500 V.V.F. members took part in digging fifteen hundred feet long channels from a tube-well at Bhatjungle in Nadia district.

V. V. F. MEMBERS UNDERTAKE WORKS COSTING RS. 30,000

THE VILLAGE Volunteer Force members in Kaliachak Community Development Block in Malda district in West Bengal have undertaken works estimated to cost Rs. 30,000. The amount thus earned by V.V.F. members is being deposited in the Defence Labour Bank. So far, the volunteers have constructed a number of small irrigation bunds which would benefit an area of 20,000 acres of land. The Block has utilised 4,300 man-days, while the villagers have promised to contribute over 7,000 man-days' labour.

FIRST PANCHAYAT SAMITI TILE FACTORY OF ORISSA

THE FIRST PANCHAYAT Samiti Tile factory has started working at Khallikote in Orissa. This factory will have a capacity of producing five lakh tiles annually and will provide employment to thirty workers and two technicians. Due to the active co-operation of the people and the officials it has been possible to complete the factory within a record time of four months only. This factory has a capacity of producing five lakh tiles annually. A sum of Rs. 1,28,000 has been spent on it and it will be able to cater to the needs of the people of the five neighbouring blocks.

V. V. F. REPAIRS VILLAGE ROAD

MEMBERS OF the Village Volunteer Force have repaired an important village road at Teerkhali in Nadia district in West Bengal. A pucca culvert on the road with R.C.C. pipes supplied from the local Community Development Block has also been constructed by them through voluntary labour. The total value of labour thus donated by the volunteers to the Defence Labour Bank comes to over Rs. 500.

D.L.B. FORGES AHEAD AT KALIMPONG

FREE LABOUR valued at Rs. 28,000 has so far been deposited in the Defence Labour Bank in Kalimpong Community Development Block in West Bengal, Besides, the people of the area have already completed works involving labour of 35,436 man-days, the value of which will be over Rs. 70,000. The Village Volunteer Force members of the area have constructed 56 miles of village roads, reclaimed 11 acres of waste land, implemented two rural water supply schemes, prepared 58 compost pits, erected three village schools, a teachers' quarter and dug a number of irrigation channels to cover more than 20 acres of land.

V.V.F. CONSTRUCTS VILLAGE ROAD AND FIELD CHANNEL

MEMBERS OF the Village Volunteer Force of Jagulipara in Galsi Development Block in West Bengal have constructed one-mile road connecting the village to Paraj-Silla road.

Every family of the village participated in the work and every able-bodied member contributed his labour towards the completion of the scheme. There was also a cash contribution of Rs. 5,000 for the purchase of land for this road.

By the side of the newly constructed road a field channel has also been constructed by the villagers. This field channel along with the Damodar canals in the area will considerably help the farmers in stepping up agricultural production.

From the Centre

(*Continued from page* 13)

From 1960-61, a separate award known as the Rashtrapati Kalash is being instituted for the Union Territories as distinct from Rashtra Kalash for the major States. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands which registered the highest increase of 37 per cent among the Union Territories wins the Rashtrapati Kalash for 1960-61. Manipur and Tripura have also recorded more than 15 per cent increase in production. All the three Union Territories are eligible for an award of Rs. 50,000 each.

It has now been decided that from 1961-62, instead of separate awards for the Kharif and Rabi seasons, only a single community award should be given each year based on the total production of foodgrains during the year.

Lok Sabha Questions and Answers

(*Continued from page* 7)

and district levels. Uttar Pradesh has organised the largest number of training camps, that is 45,292.

Q. What are the constructive steps taken by the Government for inculcating the spirit of leadership among the youth in rural areas ?

A. A programme for the training of 20,000 youth workers, both boys and girls, throughout the country in twelve-days training camps at Gram Sevaks' and Gram Sevikas' Training Centres, providing theoretical background and practical opportunity to develop leadership qualities through group activities, is under implementation. Reports so far received from the State Governments/Union Territories indicate that 224 camps have been held and 5,984 youth workers have undergone training.

Q. What is the progress of work done by Village Volunteer Force through the Defence Labour Bank resources ?

A. Out of 6,51,58,916 mandays donated to the Defence Labour Bank, 49,44,516 mandays have been utilized so far on works programmes of land reclamation, development of village pastures, plantation of fodder and fuel trees, construction of field channels, digging of compost pits, development of poultry and fisheries, contour bunding, drainage, clearing of jungles, repairs of embankments and construction of and repairs to Schools etc. Noteworthy achievements are bunding and soil conservation in 25,000 acres of land in Maharashtra and excavation of field channels to irrigate 27,000 acres of land in Madhya Pradesh. In Punjab and Rajasthan, waste lands and in Orissa 46,000 village tanks have been vested in the Panchayats for development among others, through the Defence Labour Bank resources. In addition, in Orissa each Panchayat is also being given about 5 acres of land and in Madhya Pradesh about 1 acre of land, to be developed by the Panchayats as revenue yielding assets, with the assistance of the Defence Labour Bank.

Q. What arrangements have been made for the training of the members of Village Volunteer Force, Up-dalapatis and Dalapatis ?

A. The scheme visualises 7 days' block level training to the Sarpanches and Dalapatis at the Panchayati Raj Training Centres or Block Headquarters, to be followed by 3 days' training to Chairmen of Production Committee of Panchayats, selected members of Village Volunteer Force, Mahila Mandals and Youth clubs, Gram Sahayaks, etc., at the V.L.W. circle level.

Most of the States have adopted this training programme with the following modifications :—

(i) The duration of training varies from State to State;

(ii) Some of the State Governments are not organising the 7 days' combined training for Sarpanches and Dalapatis. Instead, they propose to introduce the subjects of Village Volunteer Force and Defence Labour Bank in the regular courses for Sarpanches at the Panchayati Raj Training Centres.

(iii) The Scheme drawn up in some States do not provide for 3 days' training at the village level.

(iv) In some States, emphasis has tended to be laid more on village defence than on agricultural production and mass education.

There is no provision for the office of the Up-dalapatis in the scheme of Village Volunteer Force formulated by the Central Government.

On Budgeting and Accounting

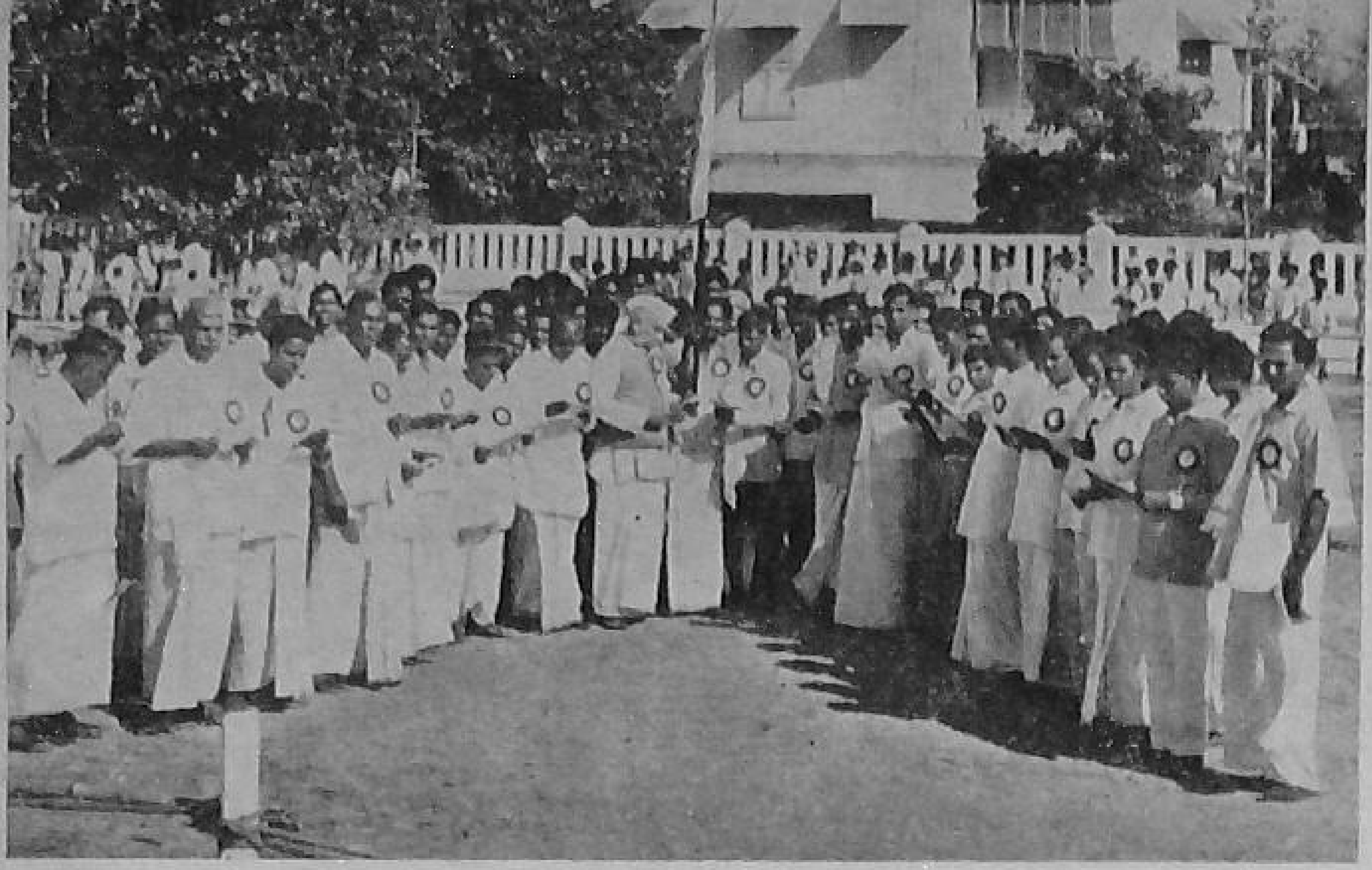
(*Continued from page* 6)

8. If grants are received by Panchayati Raj bodies from various sources for the same purpose, they may be pooled and accounted preferably under a single head.

9. Sanction of funds to Panchayati Raj bodies may be issued by Heads of Departments at whose disposal the amounts may be placed by administrative departments, instead of issuing sanctions directly to these bodies.

10. State Governments may make suitable arrangements with the Accountant General for test check of the accounts of Panchayati Raj bodies at periodical intervals, by making a stipulation to this effect in the orders sanctioning grants-in-aid.

11. State Governments may consider exempting Panchayati Raj bodies from payment of audit fees.

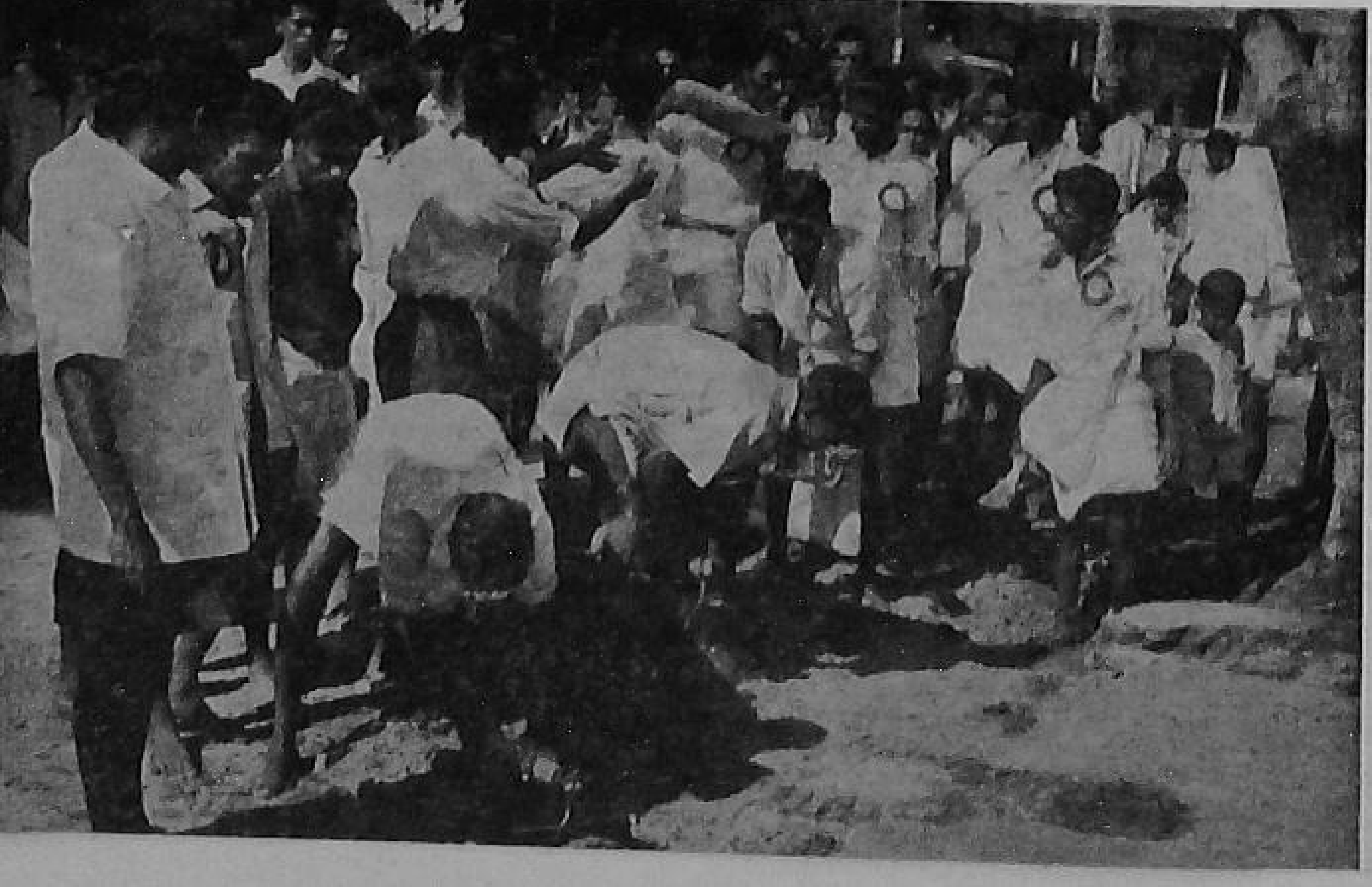


The Chief Minister administering the pledge to the V.V.F. members on the Republic Day

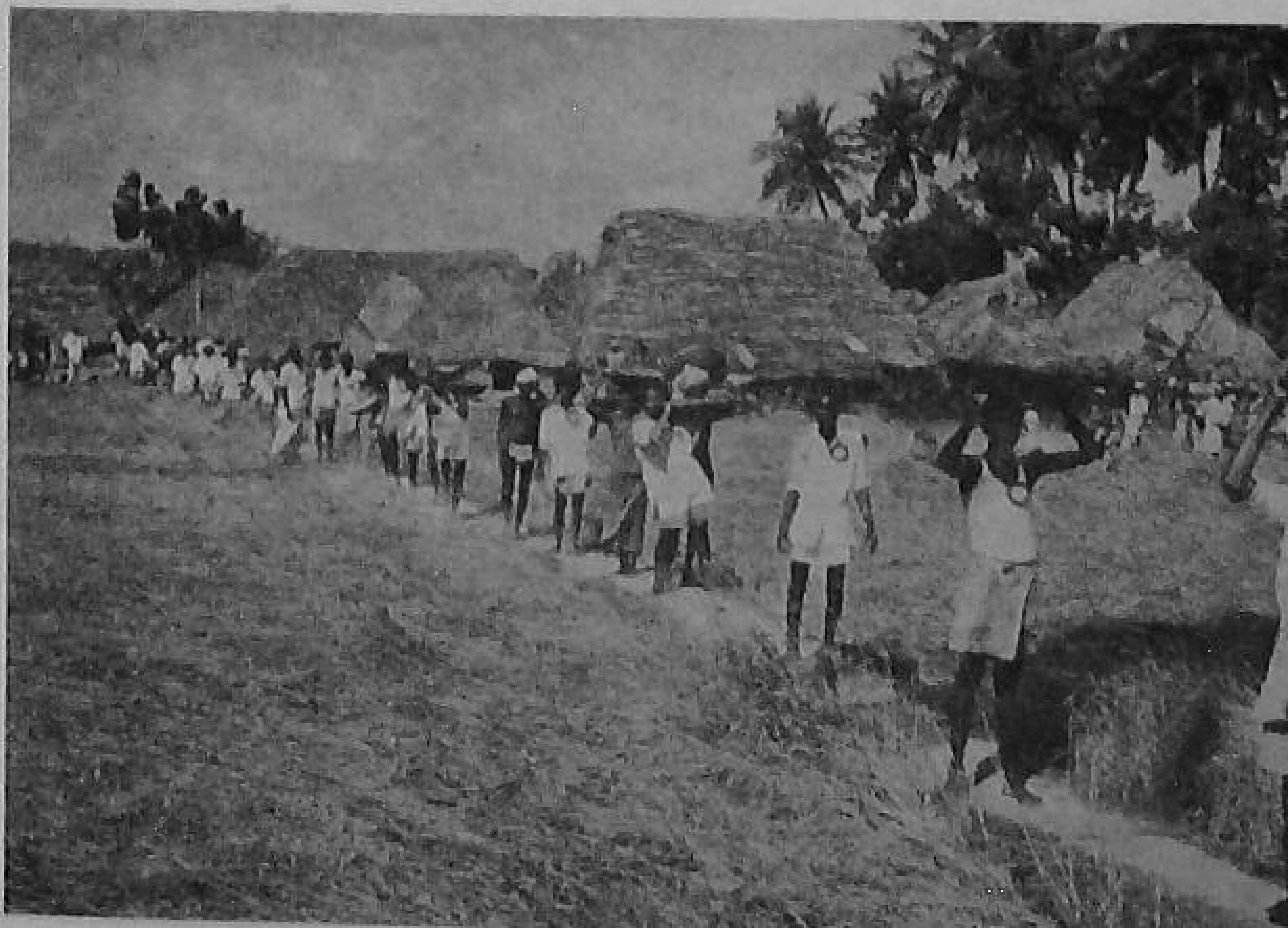
V.V.F. members along with the B.S.S. workers desilting a tank

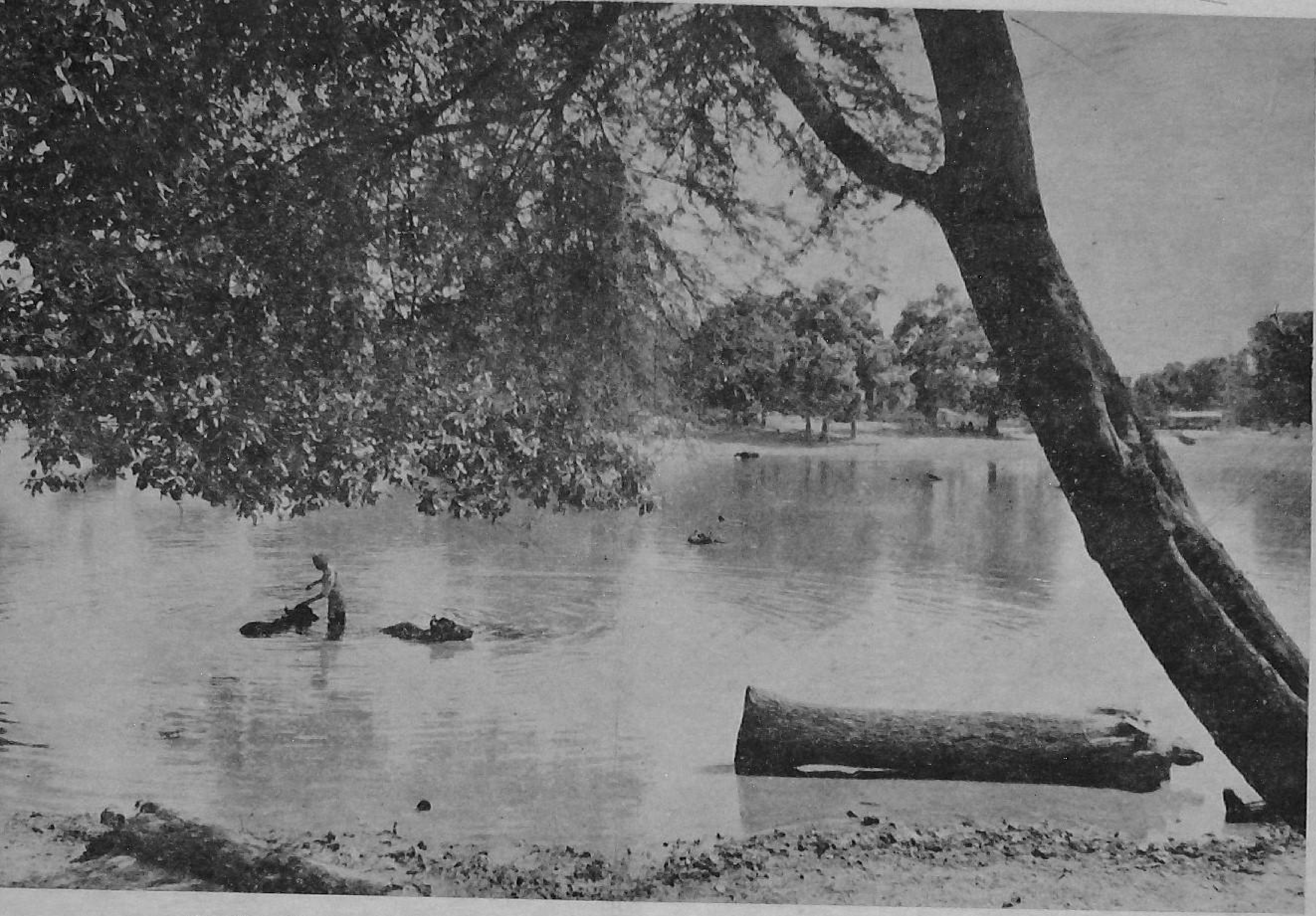
V. V. F. IN PONDICHERRY

V.V.F. in action near Pondicherry



A steady stream of young members doing shramdan in a village





After the rainy season, the village tanks are full to the brim. The buffaloes can now swim and wallow in it to their hearts' content.

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